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AS ADVERTISED

A Farce in One Act

By

CLAUDE KINNICK

T568

With Acknowledgments

to

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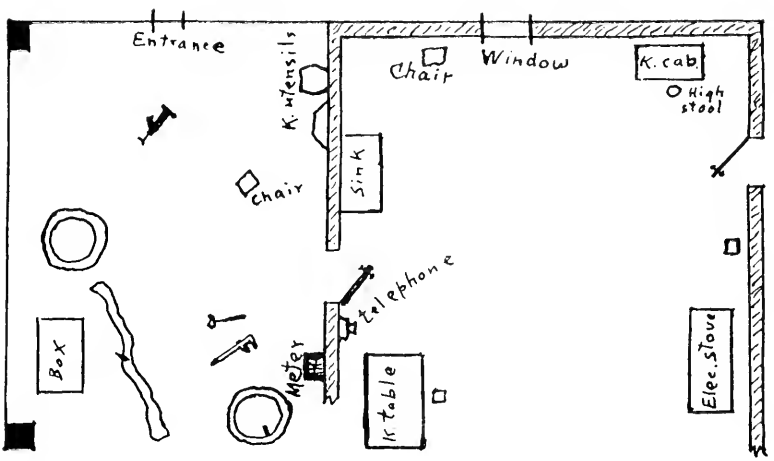

The Scene is the kitchen and back porch of the Forbes residence. The wall between the kitchen and the porch extends from up stage to 3-4 the way down stage and is 3-5 of the distance from left. The back kitchen door is middle. The floor of the kitchen is eight inches higher than that of the porch. Electric range down left; sink middle left; door to front up left; kitchen cabinet and high stool left up; window and two chairs middle up; telephone on the wall down from back door; kitchen table middle down; garments and utensils on table, cabinet, and sink, Mrs. Forbes having prepared to do some dyeing; a box 2'x2'x1½', two tires with tubes, an extra tube, and other accessories and tools disposed about the porch middle and down right; kitchen utensils hanging on porch wall up; electric meter on porch wall down; entrance to porch from street right up.

CHARACTERS

Daniel Forbes, Professor of Greek, ... College
Helen Forbes, his wife
First Dye Woman
Second Dye Woman
Third Dye Woman
First Tire Man
Second Tire Man
Meter Man
Grocer Boy

AS ADVERTISED

(Curtain discovers FORBES working vigorously and clumsily, trying to take a tire off the rim. HELEN is disposing some garments about the room on the table and cabinet, placing water on to heat, singing softly the while. She goes out on to porch middle up and takes a large enameled pan from the wall.)

FORBES—Just washing the dishes, honey? I'll throw all this up and come in and dry them.

HELEN—Ten-thirty and breakfast dishes unwashed? No, Sir! They were washed long ago.

FORBES—What's going on now?

HELEN—Oh,——I'm just going to dye some things.

(Starting to go into the kitchen.)

FORBES—Why don't you have the dye house do the work? They will do it cheaply and quickly, and (pardon the inference) make the garments look like new.

HELEN—Thank you!!!——You are very proud to have me do pastel work, play the piano, act the hostess, or read a paper before the Fortnightly Club, but when I once start to do the real work of a woman,—to take care of my own baby, cook the meals, mend the clothing, and everything, you wonder in your idyllic way what nurses and shops and maids and laundries and everything are for. You have no idea how many leaks there might be in a professor's small salary.

FORBES—Please don't do it. Your hands will be all red and black; and besides——Where is last night's paper? If you will find it, I'll show you what's what.

(HELEN goes out door up left and returns with the paper. Meanwhile FORBES struggles with his tire.)

HELEN—Here it is, dear.

FORBES—

(Turning pages of paper, muttering:)

Excelsior Laundry and Dyeing Company—Excelsior—here it is!

(Reads)

DON'T THROW AWAY YOUR OLD CLOTHES
WE CAN MAKE THEM LOOK LIKE NEW

French Dry Cleaning--the most improved processes employed

DYEING A SPECIALTY LOOK AT OUR WINDOW WHEN PASSING

Telephone 2247

We call for the goods
We deliver the goods

Now what do you say, Ootsie Wootsie? Just take down the receiver and say: DOUBLE TWO - FOUR - SEVEN.

HELEN—Well, since at this moment you are practising so admirably what you preach, I yield. **(He all the time is busying himself about his repairing. She calls):** DOUBLE FOUR -TWO - SEVEN——Hello——call at 358 College Avenue for some garments to be cleaned and dyed—pardon—what?—The Berkshire Swine Breeders' Association!!—**(Hangs up.** FORBES **laughs)** That operator! Wanted the laundry and she gave me the Swine Breeders'! What was that number, Danny?

FORBES—Why **couldn't** that stupid girl know you wanted DOUBLE TWO - FOUR - SEVEN when you said DOULE FOUR - TWO - SEVEN?

HELEN—Oh, well—**(At the telephone)** DOUBLE TWO - FOUR - SEVEN — Who is this, please? — Well, call at 358 College Avenue for some garments to be cleaned and dyed — yes — thank you — good-bye.

Now, my formidable logician, what about that repairing?

(FORBES mashes his finger.)

The garage is much better equipped for such work, and besides, I really believe that you don't know how to do it.

FORBES—I have to learn. You give mighty poor encouragement. Gasoline up to thirty-four and a half, tires out of sight, repairing beyond all reasonable bounds — the automobile is already costing more than the baby!

HELEN—Why, you horrid thing! **(Takes the paper)** Now look here:

ENTERPRISE TIRE CO.

Don't throw away your old tires
We repair what you would think impossible

RE-SOLING RE-LINING VULCANIZING

Our non-skid re-sole makes your worn out casing
as good as new. 4000 more miles guaranteed

Prices very low

That's what elaborate machinery
and skilled workmen mean

LET OUR SERVICE SYSTEM BE YOUR SERVANT

You can make much more money writing for the magazine. Let me call up the garage.

FORBES—I guess you're right, Helen. Anyhow, I might just as well give in first as last. **(Getting up)** I'll telephone them. **(Goes to the telephone)** — 4-5 — Hello — Is this Enterprise Tire Company? — This is Mr. Forbes, 358 College Avenue — Will you call for some tires and an extra tube — yes, to be repaired — any time — they're ready now — all right — good-bye.

(FORBES returns to the porch; exit HELEN left; METER MAN enters right up; he is about 40 and ill groomed.)

M. M.—Hello, Professor; have you resigned and gone into the garodge business? You could begin to make some money, if you had.

FORBES—That's funny. My wife has just convinced me that I couldn't.

(Still trying to take the tire off the rim. METER MAN reads the meter, entering record in his book.)

M. M.—Did you ever try our wonderful electric vulcanizer, Prof?

FORBES—No, Sir, I haven't. There you want to mulct me for more handsome dividends. Your new electric range already keeps that meter hot. I've just robbed you in favor of the dye house. It's betwixt and between which one of you would gather in the largest profits. You public utilities people keep a poor salaried man between Scylla and Charybdis all the time!

M. M.—Where's that? I've lived in this town for thirty-five years, and I never heard of them streets!

(FORBES restrains laughter; noise of automobile stoping in front.)

FORBES—The town hasn't annexed them; haven't been surveyed yet.

(Exit METER MAN; FIRST DYE WOMAN enters; she is middle-aged, tall, slender, and rather cadaverous in appearance. FORBES pounding has prevented him hearing her approach. She pauses, looks around, and stands in uncertainty. FORBES becomes aware of her presence and gives a startled jump and an "Oh," then rises; she offers apologies; he rises and bows profoundly.)

FORBES—I beg your pardon, Madam I was unaware of your approach.

F. D. W.—The blame's all mine, Mister. Are you the people that telephoned about some clothes to be dyed?

FORBES—Yes, Madam; I'll call Mrs. Forbes (**At the door)** Oh, Hel–

(but interrupts her name midway by overturning a half-gallon open can with a little oil in it; he sets about mopping up the oil with rags.)

HELEN—

(Appearing on the scene, much perturbed; she has not yet seen the F. D. W., who cannot conceal her amused look.)

Why, Danny! I never heard you use such language before in my life! **(Seeing the F. D. W., she is more aghast still, but quickly changes the subject)** Oh! good morning! **(Greetings mutual)** Did you call for those garments to be dyed?

F. D. W.—Yes, Mrs. Forbes. Are they ready? I have lots of 'em to get her up, so I'd like to get 'em right away.

HELEN—Yes, they're all here in the kitchen. Come in. **(They examine the garments on the table)** Now, here is the baby's white wool cloak. It's a little soiled, and I think I'd prefer having it dyed, say, a light blue than to attempt cleaning. Now, this chiffon scarf **(it is white)** you can make pink, and here's a crepe de chine waist I want colored mauve. The baby's hood you can color to match the cloak and I shall then line it with white satin when it comes back. Now, this silk-velvet opera cloak **(it is light gray)** can be cleaned perhaps; if you don't think it would clean well, you can dye it American Beauty.

F. D. W.—

(Beginning to roll up the garments on the table.)

It can't be done, Mrs. Forbes. Your garments are not fit to dye!

HELEN—

(With half-suppressed but sparkling laughter.)

Why, Madam, I have never detected a one of them in an immoral act in their young lives!

F. D. W.—

(Not seeing the point.)

The infant's cloak has not enough wool; same with the hood; chiffon is too delicate; crepe de chine can't be dyed; it rots; the opera cloak would become stiff. As for cleaning it, we could take no responsibility. It would probably shrink to under-size.

HELEN—But why do you advertise that you dye? You exhibit things like these in your window. Why do you——

F. D. W.—We could take no responsibility. As for the scarf, it might possibly take a reddish-brown, but we do not recommend **that.**

HELEN—But if I am willing to take the risk, how much must I pay for the experiment?

F. D. W.—Our terms are strictly cash, you know. It would probably not cost more than three dollars.

HELEN—But the scarf cost only $1.89 in the first place!

(Impressive silence. FORBES, who has been in and out right still working at the rim, now takes cognizance of the negotiations through the back door.)

Never mind; I'll take them some where else,

(as she gathers them in a bundle and throws them in a large pan in the sink.)

F. D. W.—That's perfectly all right. And I bid you good morning.

(Exit right up. FORBES busies himself about the porch. HELEN finds another dye advertisemnts in the paper.)

HELEN—Here's another one, Danny. **(Reads)**

WHITE & BLEW
CLEANERS & DYERS

(To FORBES.)

Well! Talk about a predestined vocation! What's in a name!

(Reading.)

BRING DOWN OLD H. C. L.

LET US RENEW YOUR WORN GARMENTS

Telephone 1324 We do the rest

(Postman's whistle sounds off left.)

The mail!

(Exit left; soon returns with some advertising circulars and "CLASSICAL PHILOLOGY;" at back door.)

Oh, Danny! Here's your article on "ENCLITICS IN THE ODYSSEY."

FORBES—Is it? All right. Possibly that might repair one of these tires.

(Reaches for the magazine; looks through it; meanwhile.)

HELEN—1-3-2-4 — Is this White & Blew — Will you call at 358 College Avenue for some work? — Professor Forbes — can you come soon? — All right. Thank you — Good-bye. **(Replaces receiver)** Now we'll see what happens. **(Exit left).**

(Enters FIRST TIRE MAN.)

F. T. M.—Good morning, Professor. **(Greetings mutual)** Reading over directions for vulcanizing?

FORBES—

(Absent mindedly.)

No; was just looking over a discussion on enclitics.

F. T. M.—I'll stake a month's wages the battery we handle beats that one all hollow. Of course, I don't know nothin' about the enclitex, but it stands to reason that it would have made a reputation if it could make good. You can try enclitex if you want to experiment; but you'll find it costly.

FORBES—I am more interested in tires just now. Here is a tube to be patched and vulcanized; bad blow-out. Now, this tube **(pointing to a casing)** is not far gone, but it has a very weak place in it. There's another one; look them over.

F. T. M.—

(With a few deft movements he removes the tires from the rim that FORBES had been struggling with; examines the two casings inside and out.)

Well, Professor, your tires aint no good. How many miles have you run 'em?

FORBES—Thirty-five hundred and thirty-eight hundred, respectively.

F. T. M.—You've run this un too loose — rim-cut — have to be re-lined and re-soled both — cost as much as a new tire. Then that one has been run too tight. Had your blow-out with it, didn't you?

FORBES—No, with the other one.

F. T. M.—Well, it's been too tight. They git pow'rful tight on a hot day, 'specially when you run fast. — Now, I tell you, — we've got some seconds in — right out here in my truck — just got 'em from the freight house on my way over here. I'll bring you in a couple, and you'll say in a jiffy they're the best bargain you ever seen.

(Exit for tires.)

(HELEN enters left and goes to the back door.)

HELEN—Wouldn't he take them, Danny? I didn't think he would. Just like the dye woman.

FORBES—He's just gone to his truck to bring in some new tires.

HELEN—Well, did you ever! And paying for space in the papers to tell us they can repair what we would think impossible!

(F. T. M. re-enters with four new casings.)

F. T. M.—Now, here's what we call a second. Just as good as a first — same tread — same thickness of sole — just a few little imperfections in molding — the average man couldn't tell it from a first. Now that casing will go for $26. You can have it for $25. If I take it to the store, it'll be snapped up before the middle of the afternoon at 26. This other second you can have for 23. Just as good as that one — not quite so free from imperfections — will run just as far. You can take 'em both for $45 — and you'll never see a better bargain.

FORBES—

(Interrupting.)

Hold on here! I sent for you to get these tires to be repaired.

You advertise that you repair what I might think impossible. Now, I think these outer tubes can be repaired — just took them off the wheels — been running on them! I'd like to see a man that will do what he says he will. Take your tires! I'll repair these myself!

(Exit F. T. M. with casings hurriedly, saying nothing.)

HELEN—They're running true to form, Danny.

FORBES—Now, — where are those instructions? **(Looks about)** Here!

(Reads instruction booklet and then tries to use a tube vulcanizer on a casing.)

HELEN—Pet, do you think that's the way they do it?

(SECOND DYE WOMEN enters. She is a stout woman, of extremely cheery disposition, and quite decided in tone and manner. FORBES continues clumsily.)

How do you do! **(Mutual greetings)** You called for those garments to be dyed?

S. D. W.—Yes, if you please. I have ever so many more to collect, so I must hasten around.

(Enters kitchen.)

HELEN—Here they are. **(Places them on the table)** This white chiffon scarf I want a delicate pink. I think it would hardly pay to clean the baby's cloak, so you can dye it light blue, and here's the hood—dye it to match, and I'll line it with white satin afterwards. Do you think this opera cloak could be cleaned? (S. D. W. **shakes her head negatively)** Well, make it American Beauty. And this waist you can color mauve.

S. D. W.—I wouldn't do a thing to them, Misses. We couldn't guarantee anything about them. The opera cloak would become flimsy when dyed, and it'd probably shrink if you tried to clean it. The baby's cloak has too much wool to dye well; same with the hood. The crepe de chine waist would become stiff and harsh if you tried to dye it. The chiffon scarf is too sheer. **(Gives a deprecatory wave of her hand)** I wouldn't do a thing to 'em.

HELEN—How do you make a living and pay taxes, if you won't dye people's things?

S. D. W.—Oh, I could dye them, but I wouldn't stand responsible for results. Now, the only thing I would even attempt is the scarf; it might possibly take a reddish-brown, —**(Helen is almost convulsed in suppressing merriment)** — but I wouldn't advise **that.**

HELEN—If I am willing to take the responsibility for the scarf, what would you charge?

S. D. W.—

(Takes up the scarf.)

Well, I can't say. Sometimes we have to take 'em through several courses. It would not be over three and a half.

HELEN—Why, that scarf cost only $1.89 new! I don't know how you people make a living if you won't work. I'll do these things myself!

(Throws garments back into sink. Exit S. D. W. right; exit HELEN left.)

FORBES—Seven hundred eleven—beg your pardon?—oh! seven double one — that it? — Thank you. — Hello — call at 358 College Avenue for some tires to be repaired — Mr. Forbes — yes — at once —**(Hangs up)**

(Turns to go out left; GROCER BOY, age about 13 or 14, enters right up with arms full of grocery packages; trips up over a lifting jack, nearly falls, and lets a safety case of eggs fall — half a dozen will be sufficient — and they land in an aluminum pan which HELEN had inadvertently left on a chair on the porch. FORBES rushes out to porch excitedly.)

FORBES—What's the matter out here! Now see what you done! did! Eggs at seventy-two cents a dozen, and the cost of living going up all the time!

HELEN—

(Enters left; coming to porch; sweetly.)

Anything wrong, Danny?

FORBES—Wrong! Look here!

G. B.—

(Timidly.)

Well, Professor, — y— y— you left that jack in my way. **(Gaining assurance)** You see, Professor, jacks are not made to put on back porches —

FORBES—Eyes are made to see with, my boy! You could have stumbled over ten thousand things before you reached that lifting jack. And now, you will go right back and get another dozen of eggs; we need them for lunch. You'll have to pay for the eggs, doubtless, but it will teach you a lesson.

HELEN—

(To middle of porch.)

Why, look here! Of all things! Every last egg fell into this pan! It's clean; I had just washed and scalded it thoroughly. **(G. B. has been laying down his packages, and is about to depart)** Hold on, young man! You won't have to pay for those eggs. We'll just have scrambled eggs for lunch. Have you eaten yet? **(G. B. shakes his head)** You stay right here and eat scrambled eggs with us. Perhaps lifting jacks will take the hint and not get in people's way in the future. Professor Forbes will go see if the milk has come.

(Exit FORBES left, meekness personified. Helen during this speech has put a skillet on the electric range with lard in it, and then busies herself with other things in getting the lunch ready. At the telephone; looks in the directory.)

Nine-oh-seven — Please call at 358 College Avenue for some garments I want dyed — Professor Forbes — yes — right away — very good — good-bye.

(FORBES re-enters with milk bottle, which he sets on the cabinet. He then goes out on porch. HELEN continues preparations for lunch.)

FORBES—

(Picking up the vulcanizer and standing one of the casings up.)

Do you know how to work a vulcanizer like this, boy?

G. B.—Yes, Sir; you put the inner tube through there and pour in——

FORBES—No, I mean on this big fire; here's the place.

(Points to blow-out.)

G. B.—Oh —— ah —— ha! ha! ha! ha!

Why, Professor, this is not made to vulcanize a casing. **You** can't fix casings! You'll haf to have the garodge do that.

FORBES—Do you mean to say that this vulcanizer will not patch outer tubes?

G. B. You don't call them outer tubes, Professor; you call these casings; that's the inner tube.

FORBES—Well, if there's an inner tube, there must be an **outer** tube. They are antithetic terms.

G. B.—Aunty what?

FORBES—Well, I guess you haven't had that yet.

G. B.—No, I guess not; I ain't had nothin' but mumps and chicken pox.

FORBES—You're lucky, my boy.

G. B.—No, Professor; you patch the inner tube with the vulcanizer, and you send the casings to the garodge. Now, let's get to work on this tube. ——

HELEN—

(At the back door.)

Come to lunch, Danny, and you, too — what is your name?

G. B.—They call me Fatty for short.

(He is very lean an tall.)

HELEN—Well, Fatty, you'll find a basin in the sink if you want to wash your hands.

(G. B. and FORBES wash hands; towels on rod at hand. All sit at table. Heads bowed a moment in silence. Business of eating.)

HELEN—Your article on enclitics will make them sit up and take notice, I dare say, Professor Forbes.—Will you have jam, Fatty?

G. B.—Yes, ma'm, if you please.

FORBES—Oh, no, Helen, very simple — quite ordinary.

G. B.—I never heard of enclitex before. Is that a new spark plug, Professor?

(Helen finds difficulty in keeping her face straight.)

FORBES—No, Fatty, that's a sort of universal coupler.

G. B.—Use 'em on these four-wheel-drive trucks, I s'pect.

(Baby cries off left. Exit HELEN and returns with a six-months baby. Takes its bottle out of the cabinet. Holds it on her lap at the table. The baby feeds from bottle, and HELEN resumes eating. If the baby cries much, it can be taken out at once.)

G. B.—Why, Professor, I didn't know you had a baby!

FORBES—There it is; doesn't it resemble me?

G. B.—Well, no—not very much.

(FORBES laughs; HELEN shows confusion.)

How can you afford a baby and an automobile both, Professor?

FORBES—I can't, Fatty! I bought the automobile with my eyes open; the baby was just forced on to me.

(G. B. laughs heartily. Business of eating still.)

G. B.—What show's the college got in baseball this season, Professor?

FORBES—All right; they have a team.

G. B.—Old players all back?

FORBES—I really can't say. Johnson is throwing, and Ward and Townsend are playing left back and right back, respectively.

G. B.—They **haf** to. The day's past when you can sass the empire. I'm going to be ketcher when I get in college; that gives a feller the chanct to talk a good 'eal.

(They arise from the table. EXIT HELEN left with the baby. G. B. and FORBES go to the porch.)

G. B.—Holy Gee! What have I been at! The boss'll be ready to throw a fit. He'll think I've had four blow-outs. —I'm certainly much obliged to you fer yer dinner, Professor. Tell Mrs. Forbes "Thank you" fer me. Maybe you think I won't hat to drive now.

(Exit right up; then sound of automobile horn off left. FORBES surveys the porch. SECOND TIRE MAN enters right up.)

FORBES—How do you do, Sir. Here they are, all ready for you.

S. T. M.—You wouldn't find it very easy to do your own repairing, I judge.

FORBES—Well, I am somewhat of a novice, but I have always been able to learn anything I set out to do.

S. T. M.—Yes, you could learn to do it, all right. But you see, a man's got to be fixed for it. You haf to have a lot of tools and things to work with. For all the repairing **you** have, it wouldn't pay you to invest in tools and machinery to do that kind of work, unless you owned a fleet of trucks or taxicabs.

(THIRD DYE WOMAN enters; she is a young woman of about 25, reasonably pretty, and quite business-like.)

FORBES—Good afternoon

(Pause.)

T. D. W.—Is this Professor Forbes?

FORBES—Yes, Madam.

T. D. W.—Some one telephoned that you have some garments to be dyed.

FORBES—Oh, yes; I'll call Mrs. Forbes. **(At door up left)** Oh, Helen!

HELEN—Yes.

(Off left.)

FORBES—Woman here to get your clothes. **(To T. D. W.)** Just step in.

(She does so. S. T. M. in the meantime examines the tires and becomes impatient at the delay. FORBES is interested in the negotiations over the clothes and stays in the kitchen. HELEN enters left.)

HELEN—Good afternoon; — or is it noon yet? Here are the things.

(Takes them from a pan in the sink and clears a place on the table for them.)

Here's the baby's cloak and hood — want them light blue. You may color this waist mauve, and this scarf pink. Now, which do you think would be best to do, — dry clean this opera cloak, or dye it American Beauty?

T. D. W.—

(Handling the garments; pause.)

I tell you what, lady, there ain't a thing in your collection that's worth coloring; but if you want me to take the baby's cloak and hood and the scarf, **at your risk,** we'll do the best we can,—

(FORBES and HELEN exchange knowing and amused looks while she says this and is intent on the garments.)

— only, we're so busy that you can't get your things back for about two months.

HELEN—Very well, I will take all risks. I'm very much obliged to you for consenting to do **something** that you advertise to do — it is unusual; and I will pay C. O. D., if I am still living when my things are dyed.

(Business of rolling up the baby's cloak and hood and the scarf.)

T. D. W.—We can't always tell in advance just what to charge, but the scarf will not come at more than four dollars, and —

HELEN—Four dollars! Why, I bought that scarf new for a

dollar eighty-nine. I'd better use it for a dish towel, and buy two new scarfs with my four dolalrs! I don't want anything dyed!

T. D. W.—All right. **(Coolly)** Good-bye.

(Exit right up.)

(FORBES goes out to porch. HELEN sets about preparations, puts water on to heat, rolls up her sleeves, gathers utensils together, reads dyeing directions, and so forth, in a flustered mood. At the same time on the porch the following.)

S. T. M.—Well, Professor, these tires aint very much. We've got a big run on the Diadem Tires just now, — priced way down. And then we've got some seconds that you can have for practically second hand prices. They're new tires and just as good as firsts—only a tiny flaw or two that you can't notice, and are guaranteed—

FORBES—Great Jupiter, Mercury, and all the Olympians! I'll find somebody that will talk business. **(Exit** S. T. M.; FORBES **at telephone)** Two-three — Is this the junk man?

(Quick curtain.)

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